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## THE PLAN OF ORGANIZATION OF THE GREEN LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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What follows is a description of the plan of organization of an eight-year elementary school, the Green Lake School of Seattle, Washington. It has been submitted for publication in a widely read educational journal because the writer, after frequent contact with the school during three years as an interested visitor, feels that such a deviation from the norm of traditional practice should come to the attention of a larger audience.

The principal of this school, Mr. J. M. Kniseley, in March, 1914, submitted to the administrative authorities of the Seattle system for their approval a plan of organization similar to the one here described, except that it was to require a teaching staff somewhat larger than that assigned to his school at the time.<sup>1</sup> Some time after, this proposal was returned with the explanation that he was asking for too many additional teachers. The proposal was resubmitted later in the same year, the new draft of the plan calling for a staff of the same number as that regularly assigned to the school. In January, 1915, permission was granted to proceed with the reorganization as planned, and in February, at the opening of the second half of the school year, the reorganization was effected essentially as here set forth.

As the reader will discover while following the description, and as will be indicated later, the plan has much in common with others in operation in certain cities of the country, plans which have already had their exposition in the educational literature of recent years. Despite this fact, the details of the plan under consideration are sufficiently distinctive to justify the description given here.

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<sup>1</sup> At this time there were regularly assigned to the Green Lake School seventeen grade teachers, an "auxiliary" teacher, and a full-time special teacher for each of the two lines of shopwork and the domestic arts. As the Green Lake School had been designated as an "industrial center," this quota of teachers was two in excess of the usual number assigned to schools of this size in Seattle.

## THE PLAN IN OPERATION

*The two-group feature.*—The operation of the plan may be most intelligibly described by reference to the program of the school. For this purpose the major portion of the program in operation during the first semester of 1918–19 is reproduced on page 437.

It is to be noted that to each teacher whose name appears under room numbers 2, 4, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 19 in the left-hand portion of the program, two sections of pupils were assigned. For example, to the teacher in Room 2 were assigned two sections of 1B, to the teacher in Room 4, one section of 2B and one of 2A. The same is true for the teachers in five additional home-rooms, viz., 3(1B, 1A), 10 (2B, 3B), 11 (3B, 4B), 12 (3A, 4B), and 20 (8B, 8A), the schedules for which, in order to economize space without affecting the clarity of the description, have been omitted from the program.<sup>1</sup> The sections number from twenty to twenty-five pupils. The twelve teachers in these twelve home-rooms are designated as teachers of "academic" subjects.

By following down each of the two columns corresponding to the two sections assigned to a teacher, the reader will find the daily program of each section. Thus, the first section in Room 2 has phonics and reading during the first period of the morning, music and physical training during the second, etc. The subjects printed in roman type are, for the most part, "academic" or "regular" subjects and are those in which the home-room teacher gives instruction to these groups of pupils. The subjects printed in italics are, for the most part, "special" subjects and are those in which the teachers of special subjects give instruction. For instruction in these special subjects, the pupils go to the teacher in one or another of Rooms 1, 5, 8, 9, 15, 16, to an annex equipped for the shopwork and the home arts, or to the playground or play-rooms.

This plan of alternation by single periods is used only in Rooms 2 and 3, and in one instance each in Rooms 4 and 10. In the remaining academic rooms, the alternation is by quarter-days. For example, the section of 4A, for which Room 13 is the home-room, remains in that room for the first two periods of the morning, is with the teachers of special subjects during the next two periods,

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<sup>1</sup> For the same reason the schedule for Special Room 7 is omitted.

Room...	2	4	13	14	17	18	19	15	16	5	9	8	1	Annex
Teacher	Dimple	Siders	Dahl	Stevens	Watson	Herren	Perley	Anderson	Elmer	Chopson	Hagerty	Fairfax	Arnold	Juillera
Grade or subject..	1B	2B	4A	5B	6A	6B	7A	8B	Writing and Spelling	Music History	Writing Spelling History	Manual Arts	Drawing Handw k Play	Domestic Science Work
9:00 to 9:40	Phonics and Reading	Numbers and Phonics	Writing and Spelling	Arithmetic	Music and Spelling	Arithmetic	Music and Spelling	Domestic Science and History	17-2 and 18-2	4-2; 10-2; 11-2; 12-2	11-2 History	4-2 and 10-2	2-2 and 3-2	19-2 and 20-2 Boys
9:40 to 10:20	Phonics and Reading	Numbers and Phonics	Writing and Spelling	Arithmetic	Music and Spelling	Arithmetic	Music and Spelling	Domestic Science and History	13-2 and 14-2	17-2; 18-2; 19-2; 20-2	11-2 and 12-2	2-1 and 3-1		
10:20 to 10:30														
10:30 to 11:10	General Work	General Work	Writing and Spelling	Arithmetic	Music and Spelling	Arithmetic	Domestic Science and History	17-1 and 18-1	17-1; 18-1; 19-1; 20-2	4-1; 10-1; 11-1; 12-1	11-1 and 12-1	4-1 and 10-1	2-2 and 3-2	19-1 and 20-1 Boys
11:10 to 11:50	Handwork	General Work	Writing and Spelling	Arithmetic	Music and Spelling	Arithmetic	Domestic Science and History	13-1 and 14-1	17-1; 18-1; 19-1; 20-2	4-1; 10-1; 11-1; 12-1	11-1 and 12-1	2-1 and 3-1		
11:50 to 12:50														
12:50 to 1:30	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading	Domestic Science and History	Industrial Work	Reading	Music and Spelling	11-2; 12-2; 13-2; 14-2; Each every fourth day	Play-ground		17-2 and 18-2 Boys
1:30 to 2:05	Play	Writing and Spelling	Language	Manual Arts	Play and History	Reading	Domestic Science and History	Industrial Work	Reading	Music and Spelling	4-2 and 10-2	4-1 and 10-1		
2:05 to 2:15														
2:15 to 2:55	Literature and Nat. Study	Geography and Nat. Study	Manual Arts	Play and History	Reading	Reading	Domestic Science and History	Reading	Reading	Language	Library Reading	Library Reading	Play-ground	Sewing History
2:55 to 3:30														17-1; 18-1; 19-1; 20-1 Boys

returns to Room 13 for the first two periods in the afternoon session, and is in the special rooms again for the remainder of the school day.

This alternation of work with the teachers of academic and of special subjects coupled with the fact that while one section assigned to a home-room teacher is receiving instruction in academic subjects the other is receiving instruction in special subjects, makes possible one of the important characteristics of the plan—that no teacher of academic subjects has more than one section in her room while instruction is going forward.

The assignment of sections to the teachers of special subjects as indicated in the program reproduced will require a word of explanation. The figures 17-2 and 18-2 in the space for the first period in Room 15 indicate that during this period the teacher in this room is giving instruction in writing and spelling to two sections. One of these is the second section whose teacher of academic subjects is in Room 17, in this instance a section of 6A. The other is the second section of the teacher of academic subjects in Room 18, in this instance a section of 7B. During the second period this teacher of special subjects is giving instruction in the same subjects to corresponding sections from Home-Rooms 13 and 14. The only deviation from giving instruction in these subjects throughout the school day for this teacher is a period of library reading in the afternoon session. When teachers of special subjects give instruction outside the field of their major specialties, the fact is indicated in the program by naming the subject. For example, the teacher in Room 5, whose major specialty is music, teaches history on alternate days in the first period of the afternoon only.

The single line dividing the columns for Rooms 5, 9, and 16 is intended to show that the sections included are given instruction in the special subjects on alternate days. Thus, during the first period on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of one week and Tuesday and Thursday of the next, the teacher in Room 16 gives instruction in drawing to the second sections from Home-Rooms 13 and 14, while on Tuesday and Thursday of the first week and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of the next, she gives instruction in the same subject to the second sections from Home-Rooms 11 and 12. The only periods of the day during which this teacher

gives instruction in a subject other than drawing are the first and third in the afternoon session on alternate days. During these periods she is teaching history to the sections of 5B and 4A from Home-Room 13. It is hardly necessary to state that the work of the teachers of shop and domestic science is with boys and girls, respectively. For the most part, teachers of special subjects give instruction to sections double the size of those handled at one time by teachers of academic subjects. Exceptions are the instances in which teachers are responsible for work in history, shop, domestic science, and play. In all but the last subject in the group just named, instructional groups are composed of single sections or their equivalent. The teacher of play sometimes cares for as many as four or five sections at the same time.

The plan of operation is more fully explained by following a section, e.g., the 6B section of Home-Room 17, during its program throughout the school day. The program of this section is here given:

PERIODS	ROOMS	SUBJECTS
9:00- 9:40.....	Home-Room .....	Geography
9:40-10:20.....	Home-Room .....	Arithmetic
RECESS		
10:30-11:10.....	15.....	Writing and spelling
11:10-11:50.....	16 (M., W., F., or T., Th.).....	Drawing
	5 (T., Th., or M., W., F.).....	Music
NOON INTERMISSION		
12:50- 1:30.....	Home-Room.....	Language
1:30- 2:05.....	Home-Room.....	Reading
RECESS		
2:15- 2:55.....	Girls: Annex (M., T.).....	Sewing
	Annex (W., Th., F.).....	History
	Boys: Annex (M., T.).....	Bench work
	Annex (W., Th., F.).....	History

*The assignment of subjects.*—The classification of subjects for the purposes of administering the program is as follows:

#### ASSIGNED TO TEACHERS OF ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

Reading  
 Language  
 Arithmetic  
 Geography  
 History and civics (in Grades 7 and 8)

## ASSIGNED TO TEACHERS OF SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Music

Drawing

Writing

Spelling

History (in Grades 4, 5, and 6)

Physical training and play

Handwork

Elementary manual arts

Industrial work (for boys) including woodwork, sheet-metal work, forging, machine and lathe work, mechanical drawing, etc.

Domestic science (for girls) including sewing, cooking, design, household management and sanitation, food, textiles, etc.

This classification follows that usually made, except that the group of special subjects includes writing, spelling, and history (the subject last named in Grades 4, 5, and 6 only). These are customarily regarded as "regular" or "academic" subjects. The reasons for their inclusion in the group of special subjects lie in considerable part in the exigencies of program-making which aims to devote somewhat more than half of the pupils' time to the regular subjects and somewhat less than half to strictly special subjects. This arrangement was necessary in order to give appropriate recognition to the academic subjects without extending too far beyond the usual limits the length of the school day in the elementary schools of Seattle, which is from 9:00 A. M. until 3:10 P. M., with a noon intermission of one hour.

Attention should be directed to the fact that "general work" to be found in the program for Grade 1 consists of number work and oral language. Provision is regularly made for "library reading." In the program here reproduced literature is assigned a special place in the first grade. Nature study or geography, or both, are given a place in the first three grades. Hygiene, although not mentioned in the program, appears twice a week in every grade above the second. It utilizes a part of the time assigned to reading, language, or geography. The particular subject selected within whose time the work in hygiene is presented depends upon which of the three may most advantageously sacrifice the time for a given section of pupils. Civics is given approximately two-fifths of the time assigned to history in the eighth grade.

It must be apparent that this plan of organization restricts very much the range of subjects assigned to the teacher. The

teachers of academic subjects, even when hygiene is regarded as a separate subject, give instruction in no more than five subjects. In any one day they will give instruction in no more than four subjects. The range of subjects for special teachers is even more restricted. With the exception of the teachers of shopwork and domestic science, these teachers of special subjects have been recruited from the staff of regular teachers. They are teachers who manifested special talent or ability and interest in their present specialties. Through focusing attention upon these specialties since the installation of the plan, they have increased the superiority of their abilities in them over that possessed by the teacher in the usual elementary-school organization.

*The length of periods.*—In order to make the plan possible, it is necessary to have a uniform length of period for all grades. Reference to the extreme left-hand column of the program reproduced will show that there are six 40-minute and two 35-minute periods in the school day for all grades above the second. For the first two grades, there is one less 35-minute period. The objection likely to arise out of the impropriety of attempting to require children of the lower grades to pursue the same type of activity through a 40-minute period has been anticipated by the provision of more than a single type within each period. This is partially apparent in the program reproduced. It is more apparent in observation of the classroom procedure within a period. Such observation discovers no 35- or 40-minute period in which a single type of activity—as the psychologist would define this—extends through the full period.

In subjects where it is appropriate—and this will apply more often to the work of the teacher of academic than to that of the teacher of special subjects—a part of the period is devoted to supervised study. The section whose study is being supervised is the only one present in the room at the time.

*Irregular programs for individual pupils.*—With the program as here organized, it has been possible to adapt daily programs to the needs of individual pupils. When it becomes desirable to move a bright pupil more rapidly than a grade a year, it is accomplished by allowing him to take an academic subject in the grade immediately above him during the period when the program for his section calls for a special subject. For example, a bright pupil in



Grade 7B in Room 18, during the second half of the double period of industrial work (before the period for recess in the afternoon) for one semester may take reading with Grade 7A in Room 19. He is also doing the work in reading in his own grade. By similar adjustments for other subjects in succeeding semesters, a half-grade is soon gained without the losses entailed by double-promotion in the usual organization. By this plan a score or more of children in this school of 600 to 700 pupils advance to the half-grade above them in each semester. This means, of course, that many more than this proportion are carrying such irregular programs within any one semester. On the other hand, the pupil slower than normal, who has failed in a subject, may have his program arranged so as to make up the failed work.

*Grouping pupils according to ability.*—Another feature of the plan as followed which, like the preceding, is in the nature of a recognition of individual needs, is the grouping of the pupils in any half-grade by capacity and ability. There were, during the semester for which the program reproduced was arranged, three sections of 1B, two of each higher B grade except the seventh, and one section of all other half-grades. For those half-grades for which there are two or three sections the pupils are divided into groups of as nearly homogeneous ability as possible. This feature, however, is not peculiarly inherent in this plan since it may be used in any school organized on the usual plan where there are enough pupils of a grade or half-grade to be so divided. But the fact that the plan as carried out does so assign its pupils is deserving of special mention.

*The plant.*—While the plant used is not of a sort especially adapted to the needs of this plan of organization, those needs are fairly well met. There is a main building, containing twenty rooms originally intended to accommodate the usual complement of thirty-five to forty pupils each. This building contains also two basement playrooms. On the grounds near this main structure is an annex built originally for regular classroom use, but remodeled to accommodate classes in shopwork and the domestic arts. The grounds are ample for all outdoor play requirements. Twelve of the twenty rooms in the main building are used as home-rooms. As the sections instructed in these rooms do not exceed twenty-

five in number, they are needlessly large, except during the brief periods when both sections assigned to any home-room are assembled in it. The remaining eight rooms have been adapted for use as special rooms. All the equipment available for instruction in any special subject is kept in the room set aside for it.

*Relationship to other plans.*—As already admitted in an introductory paragraph, the plan of organization of the Green Lake School has much in common with other newer plans in operation in certain cities of the country. The reader who has been following recent experiments has doubtless noted its similarity with what have been called the "duplicate school" or "double-platoon" plans in use in Gary and Kalamazoo. But there are also important differences deserving of special mention.

As contrasted with the Gary plan, it should be noted that the school day in the Green Lake plan is not as long. The reorganization in the latter has been effected without very materially extending the school day. Again, although the school day has been kept near the usual length, the proportion of time set aside for the regular subjects has been kept at approximately that given over to them in the elementary schools with the usual organization when the latter have given the more strictly special subjects recognition at all commensurate with their possibilities. This has been accomplished by placing spelling and writing, and, in some grades, history, in the group of special subjects. A very significant difference arises from the fact that each section of pupils in the Green Lake plan is with the same academic teacher as a home-room teacher during a full half of the school day. In the Gary plan as commonly described, the academic subjects for a group are distributed to two or three teachers. Thus, there are differences between the two plans both in the extent of attention to the same group of pupils from one teacher and in the degree of specialization of instruction in the regular subjects.

The Green Lake plan also makes no special effort at segregation of boys and girls for instruction in upper grades, although, of course, there is segregation for shopwork, home economics, and occasionally in another subject. Nor does this plan make use of the auditorium as does the Gary plan. There is no auditorium in the Green Lake building.

The plan being described differs from the Kalamazoo plan<sup>1</sup> in that in the former the pupils in the home-room at any time are never divided into two groups, with one of them reciting while the other is studying. The number of pupils in an academic room does not exceed twenty-five, and it is therefore possible for the teacher to instruct them as a single group.

There is another sense in which the Green Lake plan differs from the two other plans we have mentioned. This difference arises from what is often given as one very significant reason for installing the Gary and Kalamazoo plans: the need of economy in the use of the school plant. Economy in space has not been presented as a reason for instituting the plan here being set forth. In fact, the present building used by the Green Lake School would not be as much crowded as are many other schools in Seattle or elsewhere, if the usual organization were in operation. In seeking the opportunity to reorganize and in speaking of the benefits of the plan since its introduction, the principal of the Green Lake School has had little occasion to resort to anything but its more strictly *educational* advantages, although some mention has been made of the economy in equipment for the special subjects, both as to intensiveness of use and as to centering responsibility for its care against loss or excessive wear and tear. A brief presentation of these educational advantages now follows.

#### ADVANTAGES OF THIS PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

The educational advantages, to which reference has just been made, are not unknown to the educational world, as most of them have been found in the plans with which the Green Lake plan has much in common. These advantages are implicit, sometimes even explicit, in the foregoing description. They may be said to take rise out of the two major features of the plan: (1) the manner of assignment of subjects to teachers, and (2) the two-group or "double-platoon" division of pupils—either separately or in combination.

It is well nigh a truism to cite the hopelessness of attempting to secure, within the limitations of the usual one-teacher regimen, efficient teaching of all the subjects now finding place in elementary-school curricula. This often amounts to despair of providing

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<sup>1</sup> The writer's conception of the Kalamazoo plan is that given in *Overcrowded Schools and the Platoon Plan*, a volume in the report of the Cleveland survey, by S. O. Hartwell.

actual curricular enrichment without a change in plan of organization. The most frequent type of change is, as is well known, the assignment to specialists of the work in the manual and domestic arts and occasionally in other subjects. The plan under consideration not only assigns all of the new rivals in the elementary-school curriculum, viz., the manual and domestic arts, music, drawing, and play, to teachers who devote all or almost all of their time to one or two of them, but it also relieves the teacher of academic subjects of giving special instruction in spelling and writing, and in some instances, in history. This leaves the latter but four subjects (five if hygiene is counted as a separate subject) instead of ten or eleven. It makes of each teacher, to some extent, a specialist. In carrying out this plan, it has been found possible to recruit and develop the specialists in all subjects except the manual and home arts from the regular staff, by selecting for the subjects requiring special capacity and ability those teachers already to some extent equipped. Moreover, this plan makes for a continuity in the special subjects very much to be desired, since, as in all reorganizations involving progress toward departmentalization, the subject-specialist has intimate acquaintance with what is being presented in her subject or subjects in each grade to which she gives instruction.

This feature of the plan also simplifies very much the task of the supervisors of special subjects. In the first place, the number of teachers to be supervised is reduced. Perhaps even more important is the fact that the teachers of the special subjects are much more capable in them than are the teachers in a plan where all must give instruction in the special subjects.

Mention should also be made of the socialization of the pupil resulting from his contacts with a larger number of teacher-personalities.

On the other hand, the two-group feature of the plan which gives pupils a home-room teacher in whose charge they are during a full half of each school day makes it possible to retain the disciplinary and social advantages of the one-teacher plan without simultaneously sharing in its disadvantages. In the actual operation of the plan, the pupil is in his home-room with his sponsor teacher during a half of each half-day. To those who have witnessed the dangers of plans in which children in the grades of

elementary schools are assigned to home-room teachers to whom they return but infrequently and for but brief periods during the school day, this will be regarded as distinctly conserving the child's disciplinary and social welfare.

From that phase of the two-group feature which assigns but one group of twenty to twenty-five pupils to a home-room during the same period emanate some desirable benefits. As has already been stated, the plan comprehends the provision of supervised or directed study. This provision could not be adequately or satisfactorily made with two groups or sections in the home-room during a period. The pupils' study may proceed more effectively without the distraction entailed by the presence of a recitation section in the same room. When there are two sections in a room at the same time, if the work of the recitation section is made at all interesting, attention is divided between study and the work going forward in the other section. Moreover, experience through many years with two groups in one room has brought an increasing conviction that we have neglected an important part of the training of the school child, that is, the technique of effective study. Study under supervision in this school also results in a small amount of study out of school hours. For instance, two home-room teachers, one of seventh-grade and the other of eighth-grade groups, last year found the average extent of outside study to be seven and nine minutes a day, respectively. This small amount of home preparation is in accord with the present trend of opinion against large amounts of it for children of these ages and grades. Individual needs are also likely to be better cared for in a plan of directed study than in a plan in which study must go on without careful and immediate direction by the teacher.

For somewhat analogous reasons, the presence in a room of a single group has been found to encourage efforts at socialization of the teaching procedure.

To the advantage of recognizing individual differences through directed study possible in the two-group feature must be added another, probably no less important—the opportunity it offers of making irregular programs to meet individual needs. This advantage is sufficiently apparent from the description already given to obviate the necessity of pointing it out at greater length than to repeat that it allows for more rapid advancement of the brighter

pupil, slower advancement of the pupil less well endowed than the average, and the recognition of special disabilities in some subjects not infrequently found in groups of school children. Mention has already been made of the advantage to be found in assigning pupils to groups of the same grade according to ability, where there are enough pupils of the same grade to warrant this procedure—a feature not peculiarly inherent in this two-group plan, but nevertheless compatible with it.

Certain advantages emanate from both the chief features of the plan in combination. Not the least of these is the relief to the teacher. This takes rise in part in freeing her from the task of giving instruction in as wide a range of subjects as is typical of the traditional organization. Although teaching continuously throughout the school day, the teacher in this plan is not called upon to attempt to cope with as great a variety of instructional situations and gains poise from the feeling of at least comparably superior preparation in the subjects she is teaching. The multiplication of subjects in curricula has had not a little to do with the increasing feelings of dissatisfaction the elementary-school teacher has toward her occupation. Relief also originates in the presence in her room only of groups to whom she is giving instruction. The decreased distressfulness is not difficult to imagine. Furthermore, the freedom of movement of pupils in the plan and the relief from monotony for them in the change of rooms, teachers, and activities have had much to do in relieving the teachers through lessening the disciplinary difficulties. This relief is reflected in the atmosphere of wholesome industry and contentment pervading the pupil body. The satisfaction of the teachers with the plan in actual operation is evidenced by their remaining with it. Since the reorganization was effected, the school has lost no teacher by transfer to other schools in the system.

Satisfaction with the plan seems also to be the attitude of the people of the section of the city which is served by this school. The parent-teacher association of the school has repeatedly given evidence of its satisfaction with the plan of organization and its operation. Appreciation of the merits of the plan is, however, no longer restricted to the teachers and patrons of this school. Since its installation in the Green Lake School, five other elementary schools of the city, on the request of the principals, have been

permitted by the administrative authorities of the system to effect a similar reorganization. These are the Adams, B. F. Day, Cascade, Warren Avenue, and Whittier Schools. Another school, the West Queen Anne, puts the plan in operation in February of the current year. Principals of a number of other schools are making a study of the plan with a view to its possible adoption. In some instances of the extension of the plan to other schools the first two grades have not been included in the reorganization, as was done in the Green Lake School.

The outstanding gains of the plan described over the situation in the conventional school may be restated in summary as follows:

1. The teacher of academic subjects is required to give instruction during a school day in no more than four different subjects.
2. Special teachers are provided for the special subjects.
3. The teacher of academic subjects has but a single group of from twenty to twenty-five pupils in her room at any one time—the group to which she is giving instruction. Both teacher and pupil work more effectively with the diminished distraction.
4. Provision is made for supervised study.
5. The amount of home study for pupils in elementary-school grades is reduced.
6. Socialization of the teaching procedure is encouraged.
7. Individual differences are recognized, not only through the provision of supervised study, but also by a program which permits pupils to progress at rates more nearly appropriate to them. Pupils are also grouped according to ability.
8. Pupils are given greater freedom of movement without the dangers of disciplinary and social disorganization often attending complete departmentalization of elementary schools.
9. The situation is markedly less distressful than is the usual organization to both teacher and pupil. The atmosphere is much more conducive to wholesome industry and contentment. This atmosphere is always a matter of comment by visitors to the school.